

the ability of the private sector to obtain financing; mine roads and structures would hinder design and use of the slopes for ski runs.

Alpine Ski Area/Four-Season Resort. In response to interest in locating a downhill ski facility in Hatcher Pass, the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys managed a study that analyzed the area and determined that the only location that has the right kind of slope is the east slope of Government Peak (see Appendix VI for a copy of the alpine ski sites study). Public response to a proposed ski development at this site was mixed. It is clear that a majority of users want some type of downhill ski facility, but there is disagreement over how large a facility is desired. There was little support for a winter village. However, there was testimony given that a day-use only development may not be economically feasible.

Subsequently, DNR solicited bids for the development of an alpine ski resort and ultimately issued a lease to Mitsui, Inc., USA. The lease only included development rights for a portion of Subunit A because commercial development was not allowed in the rest of the subunit under the Hatcher Pass Management Plan in effect at the time the lease was issued. Mitsui is interested in developing an international-scale, destination four-season resort with alpine skiing. In a survey commissioned in the fall of 1988 by DNR, the majority of respondents indicated that they supported Mitsui's proposed development. At public meetings held in the spring of 1989 on the proposed amendment, the majority indicated again that they supported amending the plan to allow a four-season resort in Subunit B. Many of the supporters also stressed the need to carry out the development carefully. Those who opposed a four-season resort were concerned with environmental impacts, noise, and effects on existing recreational uses of the adjacent areas.

In response to this public input, the Department of Natural Resources has developed the guidelines outlined in this section. The option to develop an international-scale, destination alpine ski area/four season resort in this unit will be made available. This plan does not make a final decision on the scale of the development but the intent is that, to the extent feasible, it be a compact-type development with buildings located in one or more [A] clusters. [THERE WILL BE NO VILLAGE]. Overnight accommodations including hotel and resort housing (which may include condominiums) are allowed. Location and design must consider public safety and efficient use of land (see resort guidelines). The management intent for resort housing is that it is for the use of visitors to the resort facility. (See alpine ski area guidelines, page 253 for type of developments allowed). Public hearings will be held in the Matanuska Valley and Anchorage before a final decision is made on the scale and specifics of the development and the final decision will reflect public comment.

D. PLANNED ACTIONS

1. MINING

- a. **Little Susitna River.** The Little Susitna River has been closed to mineral entry ½ mile to the west and ¼ mile to the east of mean high water through the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area Legislation.

b. **Potential Ski Area.** The potential resort [ALPINE SKI] area will be closed to mineral entry. If within 10 years from the effective date of the mineral closing order a feasible development proposal has not been received, the site may be reopened to mineral entry. Any portions of mineral closing orders 499, 541, and 549 (See Map 2 in this document) that are dropped from the resort lease will be reconsidered with the intent of reopening them to mineral entry under mineral leasehold subject to public review.

An international scale resort would be a significant use of state land and is likely to include uses that are incompatible with mining. Therefore, areas remaining within the ski area/four-season resort lease will remain closed to mineral entry.

c. **Road Corridor.** The road corridor from Archangel turn-off to the Pass will be closed to new mineral entry (see Land Use Plan Map; Map 11 in original plan).

2. CAMPGROUND

A campground is planned for the west side of the Hatcher Pass Road, (outside the eastern boundary of the resort leasehold) opposite the Little Susitna River, between MP 11 and 12 at a site where trees are available for screening of the campground from the road. [AS PLANNED, IT WILL CONSIST OF 1 - 3 LOOPS AND CONTAIN 15 - 20 SITES.] The number of camping and picnic sites is intended to be in the low range.

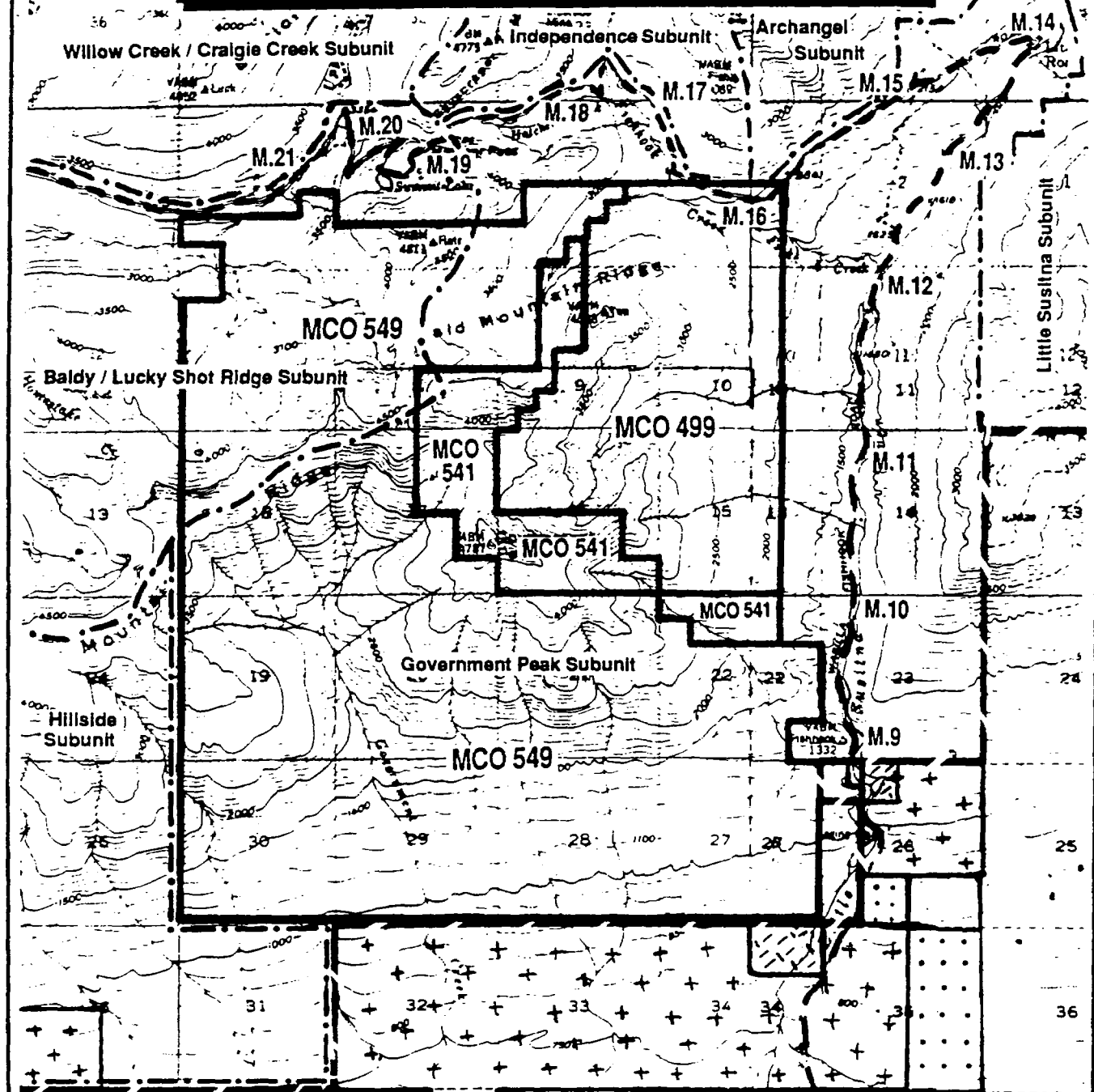
3. RECREATIONAL USE AREAS

a. A variety of recreational use areas are planned including a major alpine ski area and four-season resort, a snowmachine play area, a sled run, and a family-type sledding-ski hill (see Map 12 in original plan).

b. If the proposed four-season resort is built, the unauthorized cabin in Section 27 will likely be removed. However, if the resort is not developed, the cabin should be converted to a public facility for trail maintenance or winter warm-up shelter.

c. If the four-season resort is not built in Subunit B, the original intent should be carried out: Section 27, ½ mile access road, trailhead parking (100 spaces), eventual 18-20 mile (30 km) trail system.

MAP 2. **BOUNDARIES OF EXISTING MINERAL CLOSURES** **RELATING TO SKI AREA / 4-SEASON DEVELOPMENT**



MAP LEGEND

- Mineral Closing Order (MCO) Boundary
- Hatcher Pass Management Plan Boundary
- Management Plan Subunit Boundary
- Hatcher Pass Road
- M. 12 Milepost Number

LAND OWNERSHIP

- State
- Private
- Mat-Su Borough
- Native (Private)

4. PARKING

- a. Snowmobile parking south of MP 14 within the snowmachine play area. Final site location will be made after analyzing hazard zones and terrain constraints. This will provide snowmobile access to the trails and intense use areas with minimum road crossings.
- b. MP 14, north of the Hatcher Pass Road off the Gold Mint Road, (40 spaces) for sledding and ski play area, kayak put-in, and hiking. A public restroom should be installed at this site.
- c. Fishhook scenic overlook, MP 16.2 (30 spaces).
- d. MP 16.5, gravel pit site (50 spaces) for a variety of year-round uses.
- e. Archangel Road within the first mile in an avalanche safe zone (30 spaces) for dog sledding, bobsledding, snowmachining, and skiing.

5. PULL-OUTS

- a. Little Susitna bridge, both sides, MP 8.7 (5 spaces)
- b. Pinnacle Rock, MP 9 (5 spaces)
- c. Scenic view site, MP 9.5
- d. Cottonwood grove and forest transition interpretive site, MP 10.2 (5 spaces)
- e. Scenic view site, MP 10.7
- f. Forest transition interpretive site and scenic view, MP 11.6 (5 spaces)
- g. Lower Fishhook Creek, MP 13 (10 spaces)
- h. Beaver Pond viewing, MP 13 (5 spaces)
- i. Moose pasture interpretive site, MP 13.2 (5 spaces)
- j. Scenic viewpoints of upper Little Susitna valley, MP 13.6 (5 spaces)

6. TRAILS

- a. Little Susitna Valley trail begins near MP 14 and will continue south on the bench west of the road and eventually have connection points to Hillside Subunit trail system.
- b. Intermittent trails along the west bank of the Little Susitna River for fishing access and sightseeing.

- c. Fishhook trail to Hatcher Pass will provide an off-road snowmachine route to the Pass and a summer horse/foot trail. DOT/PF and DNR will work together on the best location.

7. PICNIC AREA

At least one picnic area will be developed along the Little Susitna River; the best site has not yet been identified. It will be somewhere between MP 10 and MP 12.

8. MANAGEMENT OF RECREATION

a. **Hatcher Pass Public Use Area Addition.** A legislatively-designated addition to the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area is proposed for the upper road corridor (see land use plan Map 12 in original plan).

b. **Cooperative Management.** A cooperative management agreement will be implemented between the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Division of Land and Water Management for management of recreational use in this subunit (see Chapter Three, Recreation management strategy).

9. PRIVATE SECTOR RECREATION

The following are planned private sector developments within this subunit:

- a. **Sledding.** Sledding hill immediately north of MP 14. (Would use existing roadbed if new route is constructed to reduce seventeen percent grades and curves.) A luge/bobsled run in conjunction with alpine ski area development should be considered.
- b. **Luge/Bobsled.** Luge/bobsled run with warm-up building, lift, and parking off Archangel Road down to parking area north of junction of Hatcher Pass and Gold Mint Roads.
- c. **Ski Area.** Beginner's downhill ski and sledding area with lift, on the gentle slope north of MP 14 below Archangel Road.
- d. **Ski Trails.** Groomed ski trails north of the MP 14 and along the Little Susitna River.
- e. **Horseback Trail Rides.** Horseback trail ride (commercial) and corral facility south of MP 14.
- f. **Commercial Gold Panning.** See guidelines 3, page 136.
- g. **Alpine Ski Area/Four-Season Resort.** See guideline 4, page 253.